

Earth Action First! Update

No.31 SEPTEMBER 96

30p

'Look upon my works ye mighty and despair' – Shelley.

RAINBOW KEEPERS IN RUSSIA ATTACKED

The Rainbow Keepers are an anarchist ecological movement active in protesting against various projects in the former USSR. They started a camp on the 10th August to protest against the construction of the Rostov nuclear power plant situated thirteen kilometres away from Volgodonsk in the Rostov-on-Don region of Southern Russia.

This project is very unpopular among the local population and even the local administration seem to be not so thrilled by it. In spite of this, the Ministry of Nuclear Energy is putting pressure on the local administration and is quickly recruiting personnel to work at the nuclear power plant. Early in the morning on 22nd August the camp was attacked and people were searched and beaten by people in military clothes who wore no identification. They did this with extreme brutality and people who resisted were given death threats. Afterwards one of the people who had been beaten saw an attacker on guard at the nuclear power plant.

It would be good to show some international solidarity with this struggle since their camp is thirteen kilometres out in the steppe and there are no local people to help them. For more information tel/fax: 7 095 298 3987 or e-mail: rk@glas.apc.org or cube@glas.apc.org. or ed@cci.glasnet.

BRIGHTON RECLAIM YOUR FEET!

Brighton was the scene for over one thousand empowered pedestrians, the vast majority of whom were not only local but were not from the ghetto of the alternative scene, who experienced an afternoon of mirth and mayhem by the sea on 24th August. They had a heavy police presence on the morning of the party and were frantically trying to stop it early and they even broke up a Rotary Club picnic on the beach thinking that that was the party! The original plan to have a street party on one street, transformed into a mobile Reclaim The Streets once the cops confiscated certain items. One up to the Blue Meanies you may think, but the action succeeded in disrupting more traffic and reclaiming more space than a party in a single street ever could have done.

The party began with the sight of many beach-balls being thrown amongst the crowd and finished with all main avenues in town having been walked, and many sore feet were spoken of after it had all finished. Crap arrests by the dozen helped to swell the total number arrested to eighty, but strangely a Rolls-Royce driver who swerved at speed through the crowd was not one of them (metallic bronze Rolls Royce, registration number 67 PHW).

The police effort to stop the action, code

named 'Operation Oscar', cost over £100,000, and they can be proud of their contribution to obstructing the traffic in defence of Mother Earth. They can be less proud of their excessive use of batons and deficient use of brains.



Cops go undercover at Brighton Street Party.

By seven o'clock that evening everyone was in need of a cuppa (or a chiropodist), and the arrestees (including legal observers charged with conspiracy to commit a public nuisance) were in need of a good lawyer in order to sue the police at a later date. Despite a few hiccups, the action was a great success, and this huge Critical Masses without bikes may set the trend in future anti-auto antics.

STOP THE CLAMPDOWN! RECLAIM THE FUTURE!

On 7th September there was due to be a national demonstration in London to mark the two years since the passing of the Criminal Justice Act. Under the banner of STOP THE CLAMPDOWN! RECLAIM THE FUTURE! this event aimed to unite different protest groups including anti-CJA, animal rights, struggles against the JSA and the radical ecological movement. Due to the Metropolitan Police refusing to grant the event a licence, and the fact that around that time links were being built with the Liverpool Dockers, a decision was taken to move the whole event to Liverpool.

The original march has now grown into three

days of celebration and action. The plan for the weekend is a massive march/party through Liverpool on Saturday 28th meeting at Myrtle Parade, Liverpool at 12 noon. The day after there will be relaxation, workshops, direct action training and entertainment and on Monday 30th there will be a mass action, meeting 10am at Seaforth Docks, Liverpool.

This weekend of party and action signifies a linking up of apparently diverse struggles, and with this happening we will see our weakness as isolated groups diminish, and our collective strength grow through the coming together of people with different experiences. The problems that various groups, campaigns and individuals face all come from the same source and only by uniting our struggles will we be able to overcome it.

This event has massive potential and it is vital that as many people as possible from around the country attend for the entire three days, but most importantly the Mass Action on Monday 30th which has now turned into an International Day of Action in support of the dockers. Accommodation and catering will be provided for the Saturday and Sunday nights.

For more details on this event contact Freedom Network on: 0171 582 3474, Liverpool Dockers on: 0151 207 3388 or Advance Party on: 0181 450 6929. For transport details contact London Reclaim The Streets on: 0171 281 4621.

A30 UPDATE

On Thursday 22nd August the camps, which are there to resist the construction of the A30 road from Honiton – Exeter in Devon, had a preliminary visit from the Under-Sheriff extraordinaire, Andrew Wilson, but apparently he was last seen fleeing across a field, minus most of his (rather interesting) notes, with the Swamp Monsters from Allercombe in pursuit.

One of the A30 actioneers continues the story: "Amidst our rightful jubilation at this dispatching of the Dark Overlord, we must realise that this is the beginning of the end for Trollheim, Allercombe and Fairmile after two years of resistance. We know for certain that they are due to start building the road on 1st October and it seems very likely that the evictions will be in late September, so help is needed now! There are not many of us here at the moment yet we have got some of the most well barricaded sites the movement has ever had and we truly have the chance to kick some industrial arse. It looks like the CONNECT consortium are footing the bill for the evictions rather than the DoT, so let's make it a big one! We haven't got much time left and you'll regret it if you miss this one so get down here. If you can't get down to the sites you can really help by writing 'letters of complaint' to CONNECT or whatever seems appropriate."

For more details call the A30 Action on: 01404 815729. New A30 website address <http://www.fury36.demon.co.uk/a30/index.html>

NEWS IN BRIEF

Letters of support and literature for Ted Kaczynski, the suspect for the Unabomber bombings in the US, would be much welcomed. Send them to: Ted Kaczynski, Sacramento County Main Jail, 6511 I Street, Sacramento, California CA 95814, USA.

A new Anti-Newbury Bypass group has been set up called the Reading Roadbusters. It meets every Sunday at 7pm at the RISC in London Street, Reading. Contact: 01734 503682.

The Motor Show this year, 'celebrating' the centenary of the motor car, will be held at the National Exhibition Centre in Birmingham. Birmingham Reclaim The Streets are currently planning an action for the first day of the show Tuesday 15th October. Anyone who wants to be involved is invited to contact Birmingham Reclaim The Streets on: 0121 449 5452.

At the Earth First! Gathering in Wales, it was decided that closer links were needed between Earth First! activists and campaigns in the north, and to help this the Northern Network was started. If you want to be on this please contact York Earth First! Get in touch if you have fliers which they can distribute (send about 50 copies), regional actions you want networking, or if you can provide transport to Northern campaigns from your area.

The six people charged with incitement to commit criminal damage by publication, including the alleged editors of Green Anarchist, will now be appearing at Portsmouth Magistrates Court between 6-13th December rather than the dates mentioned last month. Support on the first day would be appreciated. The meeting to set up a defendants campaign for them will be at 5pm in the Club Room on Sunday 29th September at the Mobilise Against Big Mac Day at Conway Hall, Red Lion Square, London. According to a barrister who has studied the evidence this case is one of the most politically motivated that he has seen in a long time. For more information contact: Green Anarchist, BM 1715, London WC1 3XX.

On 20th August the Earth Liberation Front visited Camas Aggregates Rockbeare Hill Quarry near Exeter in Devon. A control room was damaged, a fire started under an articulated Scania lorry, a pool of diesel leaking from a storage tank was set alight and a non-mechanical incendiary was left inside a storage building. For more details of similar actions read Green Anarchist, BM 1715, London WC1 3XX or the new issue of Direct Action Direct, due soon from: Direct Action Direct, c/o Mid-Sussex Earth First! Box A, Public House Bookshop, 21 Little Preston Street, Brighton, East Sussex, BN1 2HQ.

LEGAL DISCLAIMER:
The editors of the Earth First! Action Update do not intend to encourage people to conduct any illegal action. The information in this Action Update is for purely information purposes only.

LYMINGE FOREST

Final planning permission has now been granted to the RANK organisation to go ahead and build a holiday village in this beautiful woodland area. The only legal chance now is the judicial review that is due to be heard in September. Despite RANK's announcement that they plan to delay construction the work could start at anytime. Surveying work and a small amount of clearance work has already taken place earlier this year. A camp has been set up in West Wood, but only has a few inhabitants. More people are needed for the camp although it is not urgent yet!

As well as this Canterbury saw it's first Critical Mass in July. Around thirty people turned up to cycle right around the ring-road before going through the city centre. Police responded in their usual style by filming everyone and accompanying them with three police cars and a riot van, but they still failed to stop the ride.

For more information on Lyminge Forest and events in this area contact The Flat Oak Society on: 01227 463368.

BIRMINGHAM STREET PARTY

Around five hundred people turned up for the Birmingham Street Party on Saturday 17th August. Party goers carrying banners, drums and other musical instruments assembled in a park near the venue.

A Critical Mass bike ride set off and the eighty or so cyclists headed for a major road junction that that they had been led to believe that the police thought was the venue for the party. The people on foot left the park by another gate and met up with the van that was carrying the sound system, surrounding it to prevent it being impounded. At first the police tried to clear a path through the crowd for it, telling the driver 'not to worry, we'll get you through.' Once the police realised what was in the vehicle they tried to stop it going any further by letting its tyres down and driving police vans in front of it.

By this time the cyclists had returned from their diversionary ride and had occupied the venue. Eventually, after much pushing and shoving and negotiation, the sound system was set up and the party got going.

It appears the police had information that the 'London Anarchists' had infiltrated the party and were planning to dig up the road! Everything that came near the road was checked and one arrest was made for conspiracy to cause criminal damage, then, having stopped the threat to the road the police relaxed a little. As there was never any intention of digging up the road the police found it difficult to find any evidence and the charge was dropped.

At the end most of the party people moved off but about ten people were arrested. The police searched the house of the person arrested for conspiracy to cause criminal damage and having completed their search returned to the bottom floor by lift. It appears that some seven or eight police officers squashed in the lift, overloading it, and thus trapped themselves inside. To escape they had to force the doors open from the inside. The engineers who came to repair it said that this was not the first time that they had had to repair lifts

damaged by the police in this way. The local residents group, backed by a letter from a solicitor, are pressing the council to send the bill to West Midlands Police.

For more details contact Birmingham Reclaim The Streets on: 0121 449 5452.

TUBE WORKERS SUPPORT ACTION

On 7th August, London Reclaim The Streets had two actions in support of the striking tube workers demands for shorter continuous driving shifts and more notice in regard to shift changes and holidays. This was not about money, it was, as one tube worker said, that strikers "want their lives back".

The morning started with four Critical Masses heading into Central London from North, East, South and West. After the 500 cyclists had assembled in Trafalgar Square they paid a visit to Parliament Square and Downing Street before heading back to Trafalgar Square and the heavy handed police, who then penned everyone into a bus lane before starting to push people and bikes around. They then wouldn't let more than one cyclist at a time leave the area.

Meanwhile another group of people from Reclaim The Streets decided to 'Take it to the Top' by visiting the London Underground Offices, in St. James Park. A group of about 40 people rushed into the reception area. Two people were grabbed by security while ten ran straight past and up to the 7th floor and the Chairman's office. There they introduced themselves to Peter Ford, who was, at the time, expecting other visitors from the BBC, but instead found himself being interviewed by protesters about the working conditions of the tube drivers. They then talked together about their ideas for a sustainable transport system for London and he at least agreed that public transport was underfunded.

Care was taken not to cause criminal damage to the office as a banner was hung out the window reading 'Squeeze the Car not the Tube' and someone handcuffed themselves to a piece of furniture.

Minutes later around fifteen police stormed into the office completely over-reacting, scattering everything on the floor from the desk of Peter Ford. Laughable, as they then arrested everyone on suspicion of not only assault on a police officer and breach of the peace, but criminal damage also.

On release from police custody that evening the protesters discovered that their bikes had all been impounded. Apparently they were a security risk! According to police, no notices have to be in view for this to be legal. Not very clever of the police really to use hydraulic bolt-cutters on bikes that could, by their reckoning, have contained bombs! Even the police at the pound said it was strange to get a request to remove bikes from the place they had been locked up, as they had never removed them from there before. For more details of forthcoming actions contact London Reclaim The Streets on: 0171 281 4621.

PLEA FOR PHOTOS

Action Update needs photographs of actions that have happened that month, please send them to the P.O. Box below.

How to Contact the Earth First! Action Update

By Post: Earth First! Action Update, PO Box 9656, London N4 4JY. By Phone: 0171 561 9146 By E-Mail: actionupdate@gn.apc.org. Please enclose a SAE for replies, and to subscribe to the free e-mail server – send us your details.

Earth First! Website address: <http://www.hrc.wmin.ac.uk/campaigns/earthfirst.html>

OXFORD RECLAIM THE STREETS

After a period of relative dormancy Oxford Earth First! has been relaunched, capitalising on the energy generated locally by the Newbury campaign. The focus of the group will be on local issues, predominantly development schemes and transport.

The inaugural action was on Friday 30th August, where the monthly Critical Mass was followed by a hugely successful Street Party in Broad Street. About two hundred people turned up and played music, danced and feasted. The three policemen present enjoyed the event too with their biggest complaint being that since they had not been forewarned they were still in their short sleeves and feeling the chill by 9pm. However, this was largely due to them being less responsive than Oxford's other residents, to adverts for the party in the form of banners that had been dropped from the Carfax building the week before.

Ever since receiving massive criticism for their rough treatment of protesters over squatting two years ago, Oxford police have been very keen to avoid conflict. This leaves many interesting possibilities for the future!

For news of upcoming actions contact Oxford Earth First! on 01865 791391.

NEWBURY FLIM FLAM

Injunctions against ten people were granted on Friday 13th August at the High Court by Justice Cooper. He permitted the defendants to go onto the land at Gotam camp in order to pick vegetables until midnight that day. Unfortunately he couldn't make the delicious harvest supper on Sunday evening.

On 25th August over 2,000 people enjoyed a mile of art at 'Art Bypass', organised by Friends of the Earth. Several art pieces involving cars are now on-route lock-ons. The route walk saw almost two hundred colourful and festive people flim-flamming down it.

A compound at Ricketty Bridge was occupied for almost 24 hours and a generator reportedly worth 12,000 pounds was written off when it fell down a hill and a considerable amount of fencing was cut due to the notorious cutting nocturnal winds of Newbury which altogether amounts to a severe Compound Fracture. Police expectations of a Reclaim The A34 were dashed when, "Operation Magic Roundabout, proceed to target" was broadcast over the CB radio causing the immediate stationing of police on the A34 roundabouts.

A Police Press Release accusing Pinkertons of incompetence and requesting an increase in numbers of security was found to be a hoax. MI5 is suspected. Numbers were considerably increased by numerous bands playing up and down the route. Trespass Thursday resulted in a mass bail break ... protesting about the Newbury Sausage bail conditions. Altogether it seems to have been a very successful week, with hundreds of people passing through (and a good number passing out!)

As the Action Update goes to press Costain will be holding their AGM, and something tells us that it will not be one that they are looking forward to. For more details call Third Battle of Newbury on: 01635 45544. More than a few people are being held on remand for various offences allegedly committed at Newbury. Please contact the Third Battle office for a list and then write to a few of them.

A1(M) ACTIONS

Another day of action against the privately financed A1 motorway (from Alconbury to Peterborough) construction took place on 8th

August. Although work was only halted for three hours, extensive media coverage resulted from the action. Police presence was heavier than last time, with 2 van loads waiting at the meeting place, though the main group of activists drove straight to the action, thus outwitting any intervention.

As the devastation caused by the construction becomes more apparent to the local people, increasing numbers of them are coming out to support the protests. More actions are planned, with a Pumpkin Party Protest sometime in October. For more details phone: 01767 692326.

REVOLUTIONARY MONEY DEFACEMENT LEAGUE

Further to the mention in the last Action Update of a new campaign starting up, this month we have had our first communiqué from them. It reads: 'The Big Green Gathering saw the emergence of a new ReMeDiaL (Revolutionary Money Defacement League) class. This poetic pressure group made up of self styled human beings have constructed a ramshackle collection of sentence structures designed to provoke thought, discourse, laughter, happiness and the joyous destruction of the industrial capitalist society that oppresses and destroys beauty wherever it finds it. In order to have the biggest effect with the least effort, and to strike at the belly of the beast, the group has decided to use the machines lifeblood of paper money as a billboard for thoughts, ideas and feelings that are subversive to this life-denying society.'

As they say, 'Our pens shall not rest until happiness is common currency.' Their suggestions for slogans to write on the money include: 'Turn your life into a counterfriction to stop the machine.' 'People need to rediscover their ability to have fun outside of consumption'. 'Let us hope for total economic collapse before total biological collapse.' Reclaim your pens and start scrawling!

BATH RECLAIM THE STREETS

On the 17th August around one hundred people closed a major route through Bath at the city's third Reclaim The Streets.

The police intelligence effort was a bit sad with it only seeming to comprise of them ringing Avon Gorge Earth First! and stopping an activist in the street a week before the event to ask them what was going on. Nobody told them and they didn't notice the fly-posters, so they only caught up with the action half an hour into the march through town! It stopped on Walcot Street where cones, diversion signs, chairs, a play-tent and a see-saw appeared from nowhere as people began to enjoy a party in gorgeous hot weather. The usual cake eating, sofa-sitting, juggling, music-making and relaxing began and lasted for nearly five hours whilst traffic wardens diverted cars and a couple of cops looked on helplessly.

Passers-by were supportive and as one said: "Why can't it be like this all the time?" Even motorists didn't complain too much and some traders joined in, although one shop-keeper threw stink bombs and rotten eggs. Traffic chaos was reported all over the city, even though this was probably due more to it being an average Saturday in Bath rather than the Street Party itself.

No arrests, no pretend ambulance emergencies, less noise and less fumes.... more Street Parties are planned so don't miss the next one! For more details contact Avon Gorge Earth First! on: 01225 448556.

EVENTS

SEPTEMBER

14 Cambridge Reclaim The Streets. Meet 1pm at Cambridge train station.
28 Stop The Clampdown! Reclaim The Future! Massive march/demonstration/party in Liverpool. Meet 12 noon at Myrtle Parade, Liverpool. For more details contact: 0171 281 4621 or 0151 297 3388.
29 McLibel Gathering: Mobilise Against Big Mac. A day to expose the oppression, exploitation and ecological damage done by McDonalds. 10.30am-8pm at Conway Hall, Red Lion Square, London. Free entrance. For more details call: 0171 713 1269.
29 Day of workshops, entertainment and relaxation from the previous days events in readiness for....
30 Mass Action! In support of the sacked Liverpool Dockers. Meet 10am at Seaforth Docks, Liverpool. For more details contact: 0171 281 4621.

OCTOBER

5 Cardiff Anti-Job Seekers Allowance March. Meet 12.30 pm at City Hall, Cardiff.
12 Day of solidarity with McDonalds workers. Picket your local store. For leaflets and information contact: 0171 713 1269.
15 Motorshow at Birmingham NEC. Contact B'ham RTS: 0121 449 5452
16 Annual Worldwide Day of Action against McDonalds. Contact: 0171 713 1269.
19 Anarchist Bookfair at Conway Hall, Red Lion Square, London. Stalls, talks, food, workshops and more. For more details contact: 0171 242 8032.
24 National Day of Mahogany Actions. For more details and an action pack with details on how to set up your own action locally call: 01603 611953 or 01603 666879.

NOVEMBER

2-5 Faslane Peace Camp – Bonfire Action. Days of workshops, followed by a big action on the Monday and partying on the Tuesday. For more details call Faslane Peace Camp on: 01436 820 901.
5 Stop The COPEX Arms Fair. Meet 9am Littleworth Common, Esher, Surrey. Contact: 0171 281 0297.
23 Direct Action Conference in Brighton. Talks, workshops, discussions, stalls, etc.. At a location to be announced nearer the time. Followed the next day by a party to celebrate the 100th issue of the Schnews. Contact Justice? on: 01273 685913.
30 International No Shop Day. Do your bit to overthrow capitalism by doing nothing—well buying nothing anyway! For details contact: Enough, One World Centre, 6 Mount Street, Manchester M2 5NS.

DECEMBER

4 Twelfth Anniversary of the Union Carbide chemical factory leak at Bhopal, India.

The Earth First! Action Update is free to prisoners. Please send in the name and address of anybody that might like to receive it and we will send out a free copy of every issue to them.



UFO's over Brighton on Independence Day

AVON GORGE EF! NEWS

On 31st July Pioneer Aggregates was given permission to extend Durnford Quarry at Ashton Court park near Bristol. This Australian transnational wants to 'move' twenty one acres of orchids and ecologically diverse grassland and then blast the rock underneath to sell to road builders. This particular quarry supplied aggregate for the roads through Twyford Down, Solsbury Hill and the Bristol Spine Road. Actions to target this company are planned.

More positively the construction of the Avon Ring Road (Stage 2) through Siston Common, which was due to start in Spring '95, has been delayed yet again because the Department of Transport failed to turn up to the High Court hearing in July. Direct action has been promised for years if this project actually happens, but at the moment local campaigners are still hoping that their legal challenge will succeed. For details on either of these campaigns contact Avon Gorge Earth First! on: 01225 448556.

WEYMOUTH

The A353-354 Weymouth Relief Road in Dorset goes through a SSSI, an area of outstanding natural beauty and a toxic landfill site that will have a major adverse impact on a national wetland bird sanctuary. People are setting up camps to resist this road and over the summer Teddy Bear Woods road protest camp continued to grow with the support of the local community. Sir Norman King, inspector at the CPO inquiry (January-February 1996) has made his

recommendations which are now in the hands of the Secretary of State for Transport. A public announcement is not expected until at least January 1997 (due to political reasons no doubt). This delay will jeopardise the chances of Dorset county Council gaining funding to build this road by the time of their projected start of construction 1997-1998.

The intention is now to continue to expand the campaign in the Dorset area through fund-raising, publicity and actions. Help in all these areas would be greatly welcomed. For more details contact: 0468 221 454.

RECLAIM THE VALLEYS 2

Reclaim the Valleys 2 was rockin' and wrecked. With less than 50 hardcore activists on three days, they certainly put the boot further up Celtic Enemy's arse. At 6am on Wednesday, the Celtic Energy offices were stormed and by the time the enemy arrived for work, they found oak trees (saved from Brynhenllys) planted all over the car park, activists d-locked to every door and gate, and superglued locks. Twenty-two arrests were made.

On Thursday, they returned to the now working Brynhenllys site and work was stopped whilst the workers beat activists up and held them illegally. Work then recommenced as twenty activists were arrested for breach of the peace!

On Friday a memorial parade was held with local support going through Selar and on Saturday and Sunday they danced (respect to 'Oops' from Reading). Media coverage was very high with actions being headline news on Welsh television for three nights as well as articles in every paper.

They are now taking stock for the winter while

Nant Helen is preparing defenses for a likely October eviction. All those talking about a new style of tree defence, get down there and check out the possibilities of the dense forestry plantations. As Wales has such a high number of ecologically dodgy projects, new targets must be considered but the fight against open cast goes on. For more information call: 0385 711364.

NABURN WOODS

A direct action camp has been set up in Naburn Woods near York to protect a very beautiful piece of land threatened with development. BAA McArthur Glen are intending to build a huge out of town factory outlet shopping centre, designed to attract people from a seventy mile radius. The scheme will increase traffic along York's already busy and dangerous roads and add to the difficulties faced by the many small businesses in York's city centre.

Court summons were posted around the protest site on 2nd September and the eviction hearing was on 5th September, which means that it is possible that the eviction will have taken place by the time that you read this. If not then they really need as many people to get down to the site as soon as possible for when it does happen. The sum total of the defenses at the moment is one treehouse and three walkways.

This was totally unexpected so they still need lots of tat. Anything you've got we could really make use of, especially locks, cement, harnesses, tarps and expertise. It really is a beautiful site, and now it looks like it might only be there for a few more days. They need you at the moment much more than any of the big campaigns, and every single person will make a difference. For more details contact: 0831 586 938 or 01904 651 407 as soon as possible.

FARNBOROUGH

On Monday 2nd September, at the Farnborough Airshow, two women were arrested on suspicion of causing criminal damage to a Hawk Jet by throwing red paint over it. Both British Aerospace and the MoD denied the incident had taken place and it was left to the Charge Sergeant at Aldershot police station to confirm that the women had actually been arrested. He had obviously not been informed in time that the whole thing should be hushed, so as to avoid even further embarrassment to BAe, still recovering from the 'Seeds of Hope' court case.

Outside the airshow there were around forty arrests during a protest against militarisation. On Nov. 5th there are to be further actions at the COPEX Arms Fair.

For more details contact 0171 281 0297.

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Please send me the next twelve copies of the EF! Action Update, here is my minimum contribution of £5 (£6 for International). Don't send cash, make cheques payable to Earth First! Donations above £5, for those who can afford it, enable us to reply to enquiries and give free subscriptions to prisoners, libraries, community groups etc. Please send more if you can. False names are better for security, and postal orders are more secure than cheques.

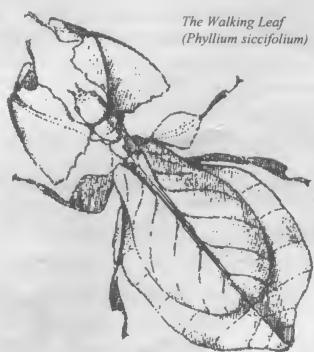
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DIOXIN: A FUNDAMENTAL THREAT TO THE FUTURE

"It is a powerful image: industrial civilization as one vast, stinking extermination camp. We all live in Bhopal, some closer to the gas chambers and to the mass graves, but all of us close enough to be victims"
— from 'We all live in Bhopal' by George Bradford.

WHAT IS DIOXIN?

Dioxin is the most toxic chemical manufactured by humans. Dioxin is a general term that describes a group of two hundred or so chemicals that are highly persistent in the environment, and are produced when Chlorine combines with other chemicals. These chemicals do not destroy living cells, but they mimic the effect of oestrogen within them, which has very serious consequences. Not only is there no 'safe' level of exposure to dioxin, but dangerous levels of dioxin and dioxin-like chemicals have been found amongst the general population.

ID CARD

NAME: Dioxins
DISTINGUISHING MARKS: Deadly, odourless, colourless, tasteless.
CRIMINAL RECORD: Contamination of all humans, plants, animals, water and air on Earth.
KNOWN ACCOMPLICES: The chemical and incineration industries.

HOW ARE WE EXPOSED TO DIOXINS?

Dioxins are formed as an unintentional by-product of many industrial processes that involve chlorine such as waste incineration, chemical and pesticide manufacturing and pulp and paper bleaching. It is not a natural substance and nature has no defence against it.

The major source of dioxin in the environment (70%) comes from incinerators burning chlorinated wastes. Other sources include paper mills which use bleaching in their processes and with the production of Polyvinyl Chloride (PVC) plastics, cars (because chlorinated chemicals are added to fuels), and recycling smelters.

The major exposure route of dioxin is our diet. Since dioxin is fat soluble, it is mainly found in red meat, dairy products, milk and fish. These toxins become more concentrated as they rise up the food chain so that dioxin levels in fish can be 100,000 times or more than that of their surrounding environment.

"It's like putting a hand grenade into the centre of human biology."

Ralph Ryder, co-ordinator,
Communities Against Toxics

DAMAGE TO ECO-SYSTEMS

Wildlife studies have shown for decades that animals are being affected by this invisible, tasteless, odourless, deadly threat. In 1950, researchers at Syracuse University exposed young roosters to DDT (a pesticide containing oestrogen) and results showed that their testicles only grew to 18% of normal size.

A 1963 study showed that cysts and cancers developed in mice treated with oestrogen as new-borns.

Reports of odd behaviour began to appear as well: pairs of female gulls (so-called 'gay gulls') sharing nests, pairs of terns failing to sit on their eggs — neglecting to defend their nests against predators and alligators with penises so small they couldn't reproduce.

'No matter where you live today — whether in NYC, or on a remote island in the Arctic Ocean, anyone willing to put up the \$2,000 for testing will find more than 250 synthetic industrial chemicals in their body'

— *Rachel's Environmental Health News*

DAMAGE TO HUMAN HEALTH

Damage to human health caused by exposure to dioxin includes:

GENERAL: wasting diseases, suppressed immune defenses against infectious diseases,

MEN: Reduction in sperm counts which have declined by 50% in the last 50 years) and semen quality, testicular cancer, reproductive abnormalities, such as undescended testes. (Basically we are talking about the feminisation of all male offspring.)

WOMEN: endometriosis — a painful growth outside the uterus, breast cancer, (in 1960, a woman's chance of developing breast cancer, during her lifetime was one in 20. Today the chances are one in 8.)

CHILDREN & FOETUSES: Cerebral palsy, mental retardation and reduced IQ, learning disability, attention deficit, hyperactivity disorder, hydrocephalus, seizures and other permanent neurological abnormalities. (The foetus lives in the womb enclosed inside a fluid filled sac called the placenta, which provides a barrier to many poisons that the mother might ingest. However, unlike many other poisons, dioxin crosses the placenta and begins affecting the foetus. The human body retains dioxin, so a 'body burden' begins accumulating during our early months in the womb).

Dioxin was the primary toxic component of Agent Orange

SO WHAT IS THE GOVERNMENT DOING ABOUT THIS?

Closing down incinerators? Banning the use of PVC? Waging war on the Chemical Corporations? No. Instead, on 25th July 1995 the Institute for Environment and Health published a Government commissioned report entitled: 'Environmental Oestrogens: Consequences to Human Health and Wildlife.' One of the main conclusions of this report is that: "Proof of a cause-effect relationship between exposure to oestrogens in the environment and adverse effects on human reproductive health is likely to remain elusive. Similarly it may not be possible to identify conclusively which agents, acting singularly or in combination, are responsible for adverse effects in wildlife populations." Whilst we are all being horrifically poisoned, the conclusion of the research commissioned by the government is that more research needs to be done. If that is what governments do, if that is all the precautionary measures that they are willing to take, then we are far better off without them. It is time to take action ourselves. It is time that more attention be given to issues other than roads. It is vital that releases of dioxins are stopped soon or else the consequences will be grave.

The time for talking is well over. We ALL have a reason to hit the chemical companies where it hurts (in the genitals just where they have hit us). It is time to carry out direct action on the chemical industry so that they are brought to their knees. What are we waiting for?

'It is clearly time for action to stop all further releases of Dioxin into the environment'
— *Greenpeace Dioxin report*.

GET INVOLVED

Toxic Alert! is a new non-violent direct action network focused on the chemical industry. Write to them: c/o PO Box 2600, Brighton, BN2 2DY: Tel 01273 685913. Get on the mailing list, become a contact. Do some actions.

Visit the EF! Toxic Mutants Website: <http://www.hrc.wmin.ac.uk/campaigns/earthfirst/toxmut.html>

Communities Against Toxics PO Box 29, Ellesmere Port, South Wirral, L66 3TX. Tel: 0151 339 5473 Fax: 0151 347 1213. Email: cats@gn.apc.org CATS also publish a grassroots magazine, TOXCAT, subscription £12 per year.

EF! CONTACTS SEPTEMBER '96

A30 Action
PO BOX 6
Ottery St. Mary
Devon. EX11 1YL
01404 815729
Mobile 0385 278156/7
<http://www.fury361.demon.co.uk/a30/index.htm>

Avon Gorge EF!
Box 51
Greenleaf Bookshop
82 Colston Street
Bristol BS1 5BB
01225 448556
01225 314040

Beal Valley Rescue
33 Valley Rise
Rushcroft
Oldham
Lancashire
OL2 7QF
tel contact
c/o Rossendale EF

Birmingham EF!
c/o 115 Acoaster Rd
Moseley
Birmingham B13
0121 449 5452

Blackburn EF!
15, Midsummer St.
Blackburn
Lancs. BB2 1HH
Tel: 01254 77079
jennie@hoole.demon.co.uk

Cambridge EF!
Box E
12 Mill Road
Cambridge,
01223 69347
tgs1001@hermes.cam.ac.uk

Cardiff EF!
PO Box 7
Cardiff, CF2 4XX

Cardigan Bay EF!
c/o Box E
Oakridge
Taliesin
Machynleth
Powys. SY20 8JW
rck3@aberystwyth.ac.uk

Cheltenham Eco-Network
c/o The Basement
1 Portland Square
Cheltenham
Glos. GL52 2HT

Dart Valley EF!
c/o SWAN
PO Box 4
Buckfastleigh
Devon TQ11 0YZ

Faslane Peace Camp
Shandon
Helensburgh
Dumbartonshire
Scotland. G84 8HT
01436 820901

Felixstowe EF!
'Merrow'
Felixstowe Ferry
Suffolk IP11 9RZ

Glasgow EF!
PO Box 180,
Glasgow, G4 9AB.
0141 226 5066LEAF
Box Z,
13, Biddulph St
Leicester LE2 1BH
0116 255 3223
Fax: as phone

Leeds EF!
16 Sholebrook Ave
Chapeltown
Leeds LS7 3HB
0113 262 9365
cornerstone@gn.apc.org

Lune EF!
78a Penny Street
Lancaster
01524 849313

Manchester EF!
Dept 29, 1 Newton St
Manchester M1 1HW
0161 274 4665
coniberr@cs.man.ac.uk

Merseyside EF!
PO Box 187
160 Mount Pleasant
Liverpool L69 7BR
0151 794 4167

Mid-Somerset EF!
PO Box 23
5 High St
Glastonbury
Somerset BA6 9PU
01458 831545

Mid-Sussex EF!
Box A
Public House Bookshop
Little Preston Street
Brighton, East Sussex
BN1 2HQ

Newcastle EF!
4, The Cloth Market
Newcastle-Upon-Tyne
NE1 1EA
0191 273 4997

No M66
14 Eaton Ave.
Oldham, OL8 4HR
0161 628 4727

Norwich EF!
The GreenHouse
48 Bethel St
Norwich, Norfolk
01603 631007
Fax: 01603 666879
nen@gn.apc.org

Notts EF!
Box EF!
180 Mansfield Rd
Nottingham
0115 958 5666

Oxford EF!
Box E
111 Magdalen Rd
Oxford, OX4 1RQ
01865 791391

Reclaim the Streets
PO BOX 9656
London N4 4JY
0171 281 4621
rts@gn.apc.org
<http://www.hrc.wmin.ac.uk/campaigns/rts.html>

Reclaim the Valleys
c/o Swansea
Environment Center
Pier Street
Swansea, SA1 1RY
0385 711364

Residents Against the M74
c/o Larkfield Centre
39 Ingfield Street
Govanhill
Glasgow G32 7AX
0141 424 1797

Rossendale EF!
8 Milner Street
Whitworth
Rossendale
Lancs
OL12 8RQ
01706 522557

Sheffield EF!
c/o Shefin
201 Crookes Valley Rd
Sheffield S10 1BA
0114 2671200
hjgoss@pine.shu.ac.uk

South Downs EF!
c/o Prior House
6 Tilbury Place
Brighton BN2 2GY
savage@easy.net.co.uk
<http://www.hrc.wmin.ac.uk/campaigns/earlhirst.html>

South Somerset EF!
31 Hamdon Close
Stoke-Sub-Hamdon
Somerset TA 14 6QN
01935 825074

Staffs Earth Action Net.
c/o Stoke-On-Trent College
S.U.
Howard Place
Stoke Road
Shelton
Stoke-On-Trent. ST1 4LY
01782 603656
Fax: 01782 260818

Swansea Freedom Collective
PO BOX 235
Mumbles
Swansea SA3 4YY
saihomp@swansea.ac.uk

The Flat Oak Society
c/o 3 St Alphege Lane
Canterbury
Kent. CT1 2EB
01227 463368

Toxic Alert EF!
PO Box 2600
Brighton BN2 2DY

Upper Nene EF!
Box E.
24 St. Michaels Avenue,
Northampton NN1

Wolves EF!
c/o Wolves Hunt Sabs
Box H
Wolves University Students
Union
Wulfruna St
Wolverhampton

York EF!
c/o York LEAF,
Uni of York Union,
Heslington,
York YO1 5DD
socs203@york.ac.uk

SUPPORT GROUPS
Corporate Watch
Box E
111, Magdalen Rd
Oxford, OX4 1RQ
01865 791391

Dead Trees EF!/Do or Die
c/o South Downs EF!

DELTA
Box Z
13, Biddulph Street
Leicester LE2 1BH
0116 255 3223
Tel: 0116 255 3223

Direct Action Direct!
c/o Chichester EF!
PO BOX 99
Chichester
W. Sussex. PO19 4GL

Earth First! Action Update
PO Box 9656
London N4 4JY.
0171 561 9146
actionupdate@gn.apc.org

Earth Liberation Prisoners
c/o Mid-Somerset EF!
P.M.Blackmore@mcl.ac.uk

Mendip Hills not Holes
PO Box 2113
Shepton Mallet, BA4
01749 880144

Road Alert!
PO Box 5544
Newbury
Berkshire RG14 5FB
roadalert@gn.apc.org

Toxic Alert!

c/o Toxcat

P.O.Box 29

Ellesmere Port

L66 3TX

0151 339 5471

cats@gn.apc.org

Wandsworth Eco-village
Gangoito Wharf
York Road
London SW11

0171 223 8557

INTERNATIONAL

An Talamh Glas
c/o Anne
Abbey Street
Ballinrobe
Co Mayo
Eire

Earth First! Journal

POB 1415

Eugene OR 97440

USA

00 1503 7419191

earthfirst@igc.apc.org

Australia EF!

Canopy

POB 1738Q GPO

Melbourne 3001

Victoria. Australia

(0061) 3 3547972

EFI France

Eco-Action

2 Bis Arthur Magot

60000 Beauvois

France

Germany EF!

c/o Avalon

Friedrich-Ebert-Str. 24

45127 Essen

Germany

Anand Skiria

PB#14

Cochrin 682001

Kerala

India

(0091) 484 25435

Volunteers for Earth Defence

189 San Antonio Ext.SFDM

1105 Quezon City

Philippines

Workshop for all Beings

ul.Modrzewskiego 29/3

43-300 Bielsko Biala

Poland

Fax:(0048) 30 29496

Rainbow Keepers
POB 14
Nizhny Novgorod 603082
Russia
(007) 8312 343280
tretpu@glas.apc.org

Slovakia EF!
A.Hlinka 11
96001 Zvolen
Slovakia

Manuel A.Dernandes
Taller de E.A.A CURUXA
J.B.Xelmirez J
Campus Universitario
1570 S Santiago
Spain
(0034) 81 584321

Morgan Larsson
Lagmansgatan 9C
46 37 Vanersborg
Sweden

Rainbow Keepers
c/o Nadia Shevchenko
Glushkova 17-22
Kiev.252187
Ukraine
(007) 044 2669310
nadia@glas.apc.org

Resistance Verte
- EFI France
BP 631
53006 LAVAL Cedex
FRANCE

Young Lions EF!
PO Box 27491
Greenacres 6057
South Africa
101356.2535@compuserve.com

OTHER CONTACTS

Advisory Service for Squatters
2, St Pauls Road
London N1 2QN
Tel: 0171 359 8814

ALF Supporters Group
BCM Box 1160
London WC1N 3XX

Anarchist Black Cross
c/o 121 Railton Rd
London. SE24 0LR

Anarcho-Primitivist Network
PO Box 252
Amphill, Bedf
MK45 2Q2

Anti-Fascist Action
BM Box 1734
London WC1N 3XX
Tel: 0161 232 0813

Conscious Cinema
PO BOX 2679
Brighton, BN2 2EF
01273 278018

Contraflow
56A Info Shop
56 Crampton St
London. SE17
Fax: 0171 326 0353
[contraflow@pircreak.intermedia.co.uk](http://www.gn.apc.org/connewbury/)

Counter Information
c/o Transmission
28 King St
Glasgow. G1 5QP

The Ecologist
Agriculture House
Bath Road
Sturminster Newton
Dorset. DT10 1DU
01258 73476
ecologist@gn.apc.org

Freedom Network
PO BOX 9384
London. SW9 7ZB
0171 582 3474
Actions: 0171 793 7343

Green Anarchist Network
BCM 1715
London. WC1N 3XX

Hunt Saboteurs Assoc.
PO BOX 2786
Brighton BN2 2AX
01273 622827
hsa@gn.apc.org
<http://envirolink.org/arrs/HSA/hsa.html>

Justice?/Cothrom
c/o Larkfield Centre
39, Ingfield Street
Glasgow G42
Tel: 0141 226 5066
/424 1797

Justice?/Schnews
PO Box 2600
Brighton
E. Sussex BN2 2DX
01273 685913
<http://www.ebuzz.co.uk/SchNEWS/index.html>

Legal Defence & Monitoring
Group
BM Haven
London. WC1N 3XX
0171 837 6687

McLibel Support Campaign
5 Caledonian Rd
Kings Cross
London N1 9DX
0171 713 1269

Menwith Womens Peace Camp
A59 Lay-By
Nr. Menwith Hill Spybase
Nr. Harrogate
N.Yorks
01943 468593

Squall
PO Box 8959
London N12 5HW
0171 561 1204
Fax: 0171 272 9243

Third Battle of Newbury
PO BOX 5520
Newbury, RG14 7YW
01635 45544
Fax: 01635 45545
<http://www.gn.apc.org/newbury/>

The Land is Ours
Box E
111 Magdalen Road
Oxford OX4 1RQ
01865 722016

Undercurrents
16b Cherwell St
Oxford. OX4 1BJ
01865 203661
Fax: 01865 243562
under@gn.apc.org

The Wilderness
c/o EFI Action Update
PO Box 9656
London N4 4JY

WHAT IS EARTH FIRST!?

Earth First! is not so much a cohesive group or a campaign as a convenient banner for people who share similar philosophies to work under. The general principles behind the name are non-hierarchical organisation and direct action to confront, stop, and eventually reverse the forces that are destroying this planet and it's inhabitants and we believe in using all the tactics available to enable us to do this. The contacts are autonomous groups that consider themselves to share the above principles. International contacts are entry points into that country's own network of groups. Other contacts are ones whose aims and principles are ones that we agree with fully or in part, or groups that we think may be of use or interest to people. New additions or alterations are shown in **bold**.

PARTY PIECE AT A CROSSROADS ?

A brief commentary on the Brighton 'Reclaim the Streets' party - Saturday 24th August 1996.

The Struggle for the streets

'Reclaim the Streets' events have become important in the anti-roads/post CJA movement for their ability to involve large numbers of people, to realise the anti-car/consumer culture movement, to outwit the police, to marry pleasures and direct action and to redefine urban space - at least temporarily. The successes of RTS street parties not only in London but in many other towns and cities has also been a major irritant to the police.

For us in the movement, each street party needed to be bigger, more cheeky, more ambitious than the last if the method was to continue its momentum towards resisting car-oriented capitalist society and asserting new social relations. For the police, the ante has certainly been upped. The use by party-goers of a pneumatic drill on the M41 marked a new dimension to the street party approach; now the issue was not simply one of public disorder and traffic congestion, but of criminal damage and (in their eyes) 'violence'. It has become more important than ever for the police to limit or preferably to prevent such street parties altogether in order that people don't become still further emboldened and the police lose all credibility as maintainers of public order. Much was therefore at stake in the recent Brighton RTS, for both sides.

In the event, the Brighton 'street party' was somewhat different to what most of us expected. It wasn't much of a street party; but it certainly wasn't a non-event either. Its ambiguity lends it to different interpretations even more so than the usual street party, which itself (deliberately) avoids the normal form of either demo marches or direct action. The significance of the event is being struggled over post hoc as much as its actuality was struggled over beforehand and on the day itself. The local media have already treated us to the views of the enemies of the movement (especially Councillor Steve Bassam, whose 'misguided, egotistical, self-important posturing' is clear for all to see: build some tokenistic cycle lanes and road humps, then encourage still more traffic into the town through tourism and business policies - though this contradiction is in the nature of modern local government in the UK rather than inherent to Bassam). It would be useful, from our side, to see an interpretation of the event that goes beyond simply moaning about police brutality. The whole point of direct actions is for us to be active creators of our world rather than passive victims - even when the full forces of the state and capital appear ranged against us. This commentary is intended as such an interpretation.

An account of the event

The following is based on the experience of one person during the event, drawing on comments from other people I spoke to.

As the crowd gathered in Churchill Square at around 1pm, police began making arrests, particularly of people they apparently took as 'organisers' or as influential individuals who stood out. Possible charges included conspiracy to commit a public nuisance. Those arrested included people wearing yellow bibs [*legal observers*]. Understandably, this made people in the crowd resentful and hostile to the police, but also rather intimidated in many cases. Nevertheless, some participants were still going round discreetly spreading the word that different sections of the crowd would leave Churchill Square for the party site at different times. But after almost an hour of standing around, the crowd left as one, ignoring these instructions. Either the instructions were not properly understood, or people were persuaded more by the sight of so many of their fellows leaving at once than the words of one individual; perhaps they didn't want to be left behind with a small group that could be so easily surrounded by police.

The party was apparently meant to take place in West Street, but the crowd headed towards North St., seemingly unaware of this. Police blocked the crowd in at the Clock Tower. After being hemmed in, throwing beach balls about for several minutes, the crowd moved slowly down West St., where they met with another line of police, just below Cranbourne St. (One report I read said that the crowd were pushed down West Street by police; but those that came first came of their own volition.) Police could also be seen at the bottom of West St, and I heard rumours at this point that the police had managed to seize the equipment that had been intended for use in the party (as it turned out: scaffolding for tripods, a car, a van and sacks of sand). Crowd and police stood facing each other for perhaps half an hour in this location.

After a while, the police made a couple of minor charges into the crowd with batons drawn, arresting some people. Soon after, they donned their riot gear, although without shields. People remained defiant, although none of them fought back physically. The crowd left West St via Cranbourne St and sprawled across Western Road before disappearing down Cannon Place towards the sea front. (I heard from other sources that half the crowd or more [*were blocked in by police*] remained in West Street and got 'battered', and/or went elsewhere, but I know nothing about this.) The crowd remained static in the sea front road, blocking traffic, for some minutes. The police eventually began to catch us up, and it looked as if the same situation as West St would be reproduced: holding up traffic, but being hemmed in by a threatening police presence.

However, people began to move off together, this time towards the roundabout near the Palace Pier. The pattern for the rest of the day was emerging: as we continually moved round town, at each place where we stopped the police would catch us up and begin moving people onto the pavement, arresting one or two (drummers etc), or hemming us in and harassing us. So it seemed that the best thing was to keep moving. In effect it was like a large Critical Mass without bikes: there was no plan about where to go; it caused enormous disruption to traffic; and despite their massive deployment of resources and intimidatory methods, the police were unable to do much about it, except follow along as on a normal demo. From the roundabout, the crowd headed up the Old Steine, then up North St - where it seemed the police were trying to trap or encircle us - along New Rd, through the Pavilion Gardens, and along Gloucester Place. Here there was another angry confrontation, with police violently arresting someone at the back and others trying to resist this; but again the lack of missiles was notable (blows, on the other hand, were another matter, but where this occurred only those close to the arrest participated). There was also some conflict within the crowd about where to go, with London Rd and Preston Circus eventually winning out. At Preston Circus I witnessed the first of two occasions where the crowd quickly parted to allow an ambulance (or in one case a car taking someone to hospital): only the police got in the way. There was again conflict over where to go halfway up New England Hill. Seven Dials seemed a good idea to some people, but others seemed to think that New England St (back to North Lane) was better. Among the arguments I heard against Seven Dials were that the police might more easily corner and batter us there (nonsensical: first, there are more - seven - ways to escape than most junctions; and second, if the police had wanted simply to batter us they would have done it before then - why not in West St or North St, for example, when they virtually surrounded us?). The crowd emerged from North Lane back at the Old Steine and then found its way back to the Palace Pier roundabout and the sea front road again, where this time the police managed to impose one of their cordons into the middle of the crowd, splitting us. They still failed to mitigate in any way the disruption until, after half an hour, they shoved into the crowd onto the promenade and intimidated them from going back onto the road. The event eventually petered out around 6pm.

Police aims and tactics

In previous cases where the police have carried out a huge and expensive public order operation involving what seems to us like loads of violence and arbitrary arrests, critics sometimes detect a 'political' motive. This kind of argument is easily and often overplayed; in many cases, police concerns about escalating 'public disorder' are more important than financial-political considerations such as justifying their own existence and budget. But in this case, there was surely an element of playing to the public gallery in the proud police boast that their operation was a great success and its scale entirely justified. First give them their dues. The police operation was successful in that the street party a such did not happen, and the road was not dug up as in London. The police can certainly be pleased that they captured so much of the party paraphernalia before the event. Their intimidatory tactics in Churchill Square perhaps played a part in the breakdown in organisation within the crowd (everyone leaving together instead of different groups). Their overall intimidation may have been part of a long term strategy of putting people off future street parties (as well as Critical Mass events) - a particularly those involved in any level of organisation. On the other hand, if many of the arrests eventually come to nothing and the police are sued, the police may be reluctant to approach the next event in such a way.

But as everyone is aware, the police did not in the least fail to stop the intended disruption to traffic, and may themselves have contributed to a worse disruption than would have happened with a purely static event! Wherever the police could get alongside the crowd or get in front of it they tried to impose cordons. The aim seemed to be largely to contain rather than to disperse the crowd. From their point of view, dispersal might have been a better idea; because people remained cohered as a crowd wherever they went, the police were like every other motor-dependant Brighton citizen that day - stuck in traffic and helpless a lot of the time. They stopped a static crowd event which contravened the 1986 Public Order Act (the requirement for organisers to seek agreement with police), but helped produce a moving crowd event, which both contravened the act and snarled up traffic at most of the major junctions in the centre of town.

Neutralisation of subversive features of music and party

Those within the movement who are particularly anxious to frame our collective direct actions in such a way that they appear less hostile, confrontational etc and more innocuous, jolly etc. might be somewhat perplexed at the disjunction between intentions and outcomes during the Brighton event. One participant's account notes with (feigned?) shock that, in West St police snatch-squads pounced on four carnival-style dancing puppets. The police also made a point of going for those with drums - if not arresting them then confiscating their musical instruments. Those in fancy dress (make-up etc.) were also targeted for arrest.

Within the 'Reclaim the Streets' project, part of the rationale for a 'street party' (rather than for example a sit-down protest involving up-front 'civil disobedience' or a 'Stop the City' type action involving up-front window-breaking) is that it treads a more ambiguous line regarding consensual legitimacy than either of these two while being (it is hoped) disruptive or subversive in a similar way. Within the direct action movement that has arisen over the last two years or so, music such as drumming has typically been a way of trying to make the atmosphere of an action much less openly confrontational. This is particularly the case at anti-road actions, where it is combined with humour to shape the mood of both participants and their possible opponents (construction workers, security guards, cops). For 'Reclaim the Streets' events, the party paraphernalia is similarly a way of creating a jovial rather than an aggressive atmosphere and a way of delegitimizing police aggression.

But what can you do when the very features you intend as keeping the event 'fluffy' become points of violent conflict with the police (while those with hoods, caps and shades move around unchallenged)? Well, you should not be surprised. For one thing, carnival type events with all their music, dancing and costumes etc. are seen as potentially dangerous and threatening by the police in all sorts of ways. Think of Notting Hill. Closer to home, of course, electronic dance music, from being initially (for many participants) an apolitical 'escape' from everyday alienation and atomisation, has taken on an anti-authoritarian significance since the CJB. Hence for a street party that was intended to cause major traffic disruption, and which deliberately avoided conforming to the demands of the 1986 Public Order Act, the cops were obviously right to see the importance to the event of such features as drummers and puppets etc. These were certainly things for people to gather around (particularly in the absence of the anticipated bands and sound systems), and without them there might be nothing for people to do, leading to boredom and hence dispersal. Moreover, music gives people something to participate in collectively (clapping, chanting, dancing together), enhancing the unity within the crowd and differentiating them from the police still further. Of course the drummers, puppets, fancy dress people etc. were not organisers in the way the police typically understand relations of influence within crowds (shadowy conspirators and powerful individual agitators shaping an uncritical mass to their will). But they were certainly influential features of the street party strategy.

The fact that these kind of people were arrested so early on will surely lead to a reassessment of tactics among those who attend events like this. Even if there are at present no ideas for alternative strategy, surely the liberal shock at the police approach is well past its sell-by date. The movement has been using music, humour and carnivalesque features for some time now, and the police got wise to it a while ago as a way of subverting their order and discipline (remember the pantomime cow at Newbury?). While we might well continue to utilise such features at future events, we certainly should not expect the police to be so naive as to let this tactic continue unchallenged.

Party-goers' aims

The RTS-style street party is planning-intensive. Weeks if not months of activity takes the form simply of preparation. The direct action itself hinges crucially on the success of the plan (timing, logistics etc.) and represents only the tip of a large funnel of 'hidden' activity. Planning-intensive secretive activity such as this is vulnerable both internally (secrecy leading to 'division of labour' between planners and other participants, paranoia and stress) and externally (those seen as organisers are targeted by police not only during the events but generally). But such activity can create a special event, and any victory it achieves over the police is particularly sweet.

From the perspective of planning - planning to disrupt traffic and present an alternative through the method of the street party - this event was a failure. The street party as such did not happen, and police planning was superior.

However, as important as planning and worked-out strategies are, we cannot live by these features alone. Nor can we measure success solely by the success of the plan. Where it is successful, the planning of a 'Reclaim the Streets' party facilitates the flowering of a multiplicity of opportunities not given in the plan itself. Spontaneous 'creativity', 'leaderless' direction and 'structures' organisation can be crucial. These are features at which we can excel in crowds and at which the police are very bad, hence such opportunities can arise even where the plan fails - as happened in Brighton.

Given that the police had stopped the static street party, there was little to be achieved - beyond resting our feet - from satirically occupying an location. It simply gave the police time to regroup (and they certainly seemed to need this time) and then surround us, hem us in, intimidate and make snatch squad arrests of those who stand out. What we enjoy about moving events like Critical Mass, it seems to me, is the ability it gives us, as a crowd, to impose ourselves on an urban transport infrastructure that normally dominates and poisons us. The cars have to wait for us; we can walk in the middle of the road without fearing for our lives; the police have to act as if they have agreed to the event, when they simply can't do much about it. So it was with the Brighton 'street party'.

We were obliged to move, but movement was our strength; we had 'created' a hybrid form of collective action. Mobility created a formal similarity with the typical demonstration march. But on the typical demonstration march, there is a higher degree of predictability (no one knew where the Brighton event would end or how it would end!). Also unless there is a riot, the typical demo march is more of a means to an end (creating a sense of solidarity and strength to build a movement); the Brighton event was a viable and adequate end in itself - a piece of direct action like previous street parties.

Like a demo march, the Brighton event might have developed into collective physical conflict with the cops and attacks on property. There were many of the 'ingredients' for a physical confrontation; overall, people felt the police acted harshly and violently given the nature of the event. Many of the arrests seemed arbitrary (people felt that could they could be arrested at any time and for no reason); and police had charged with batons into a mixed and basically non-violent crowd (women, children, people with wheelchairs). Hostility to the cops grew quite rapidly and was maintained at a high level throughout (judging from all the shouting, booing and defiant chanting, clapping and singing). As one person put it, the event had turned into a totally anti-police thing. But even with the growing hostility at their behaviour there were virtually no missiles hitting police. Although some people were prepared to fight if necessary and would have welcomed the opportunity, many were frightened by the police behaviour, or at least reasoned that the police would win in a physical confrontation.

No party, no riot... Yet in my experience and that of others I spoke to and saw around me, this was certainly not a demoralising, disempowering event. Most people were laughing, joking, chatting etc., much of the time. They were thinking of what they might do next, enjoying being out of the cops' control, revelling in the reversal in their usual relations with the motor vehicle. They had reclaimed not one street, but several, and without permission: any street they wanted could be next. The event was in the most part fun and offered the possibilities for freedom and self-expression only found in the most empowering of crowd events.

SOLIDARITY WITH THE LIVERPOOL DOCKERS

WHY OUR MOVEMENT SHOULD BE INVOLVED

We want an ecologically sustainable, free society. But we'll only achieve it by complete social transformation. We should not be conned into accepting so-called solutions such as 'green capitalism', which just continues exploitation in a supposedly 'green' way. Our strategy has to involve support for the working class in its demands as it fights exploitation.

Struggles in the workplace are frequently disdained by the green movement for ignoring the ecological consequences of the goods and services produced, but as most people do work we must not run the danger of thinking we can ignore them. We can influence more traditional struggles and, most importantly, if we do not grow as a movement we will always remain a relatively small group. Limiting radical environmental issues to defensive struggles centred around purely ecological concerns can only at best delay, and at worst totally diffuse, the total change that is needed in order to save the planet and its inhabitants.

A short history of the dockers' struggle

A year ago on the 28th September 1995 the Merseyside Docks and Harbour Company (MDHC) sacked 500 of their workers for refusing to cross a picket line. Picketing began when the MDHC tried to implement casualisation - so-called 'flexible labour' - which would result in the erosion of workers pay and conditions, job insecurity and longer working hours.

The role of the dockers' union, the Transport and General Workers Union (TGWU), in all this has been to negotiate with the MDHC and the dockers to broker a compromise. No deal has been made, however. The dockers have refused an offer of a £25,000 pay-off from the MDHC, preferring to continue their protests unsupported by their union.

Their struggle now exists outside of the constraints of the union on a grassroots level. This is unusual in '90s Britain, with the vast majority of other workplace struggles having either been crushed by the government in a covert way (e.g. the miners' strike in 1984/5) or sold out by a reformist union.

The dockers have now reached a position of not recognising their own union because:

- a) the union is not reflecting the dockers' interests as a class
- b) it refused to recognise the dockers' elected shop stewards
- c) it has slowly been withdrawing all hardship funds, leaving the dockers to survive on state benefits and donations
- d) it is in the process of evicting the dockers from a meeting room they use in the TGWU building
- e) the dockers are not defeatist at this point in time and are therefore not running to the union for the best deal out of a bad situation.

This is not to criticise unions wholesale, as they have often brought workers together for collective struggle. However, as soon as a struggle starts they more than often try to hold it back and mediate between the workers and management.

What are the demands of the dockers?

Publicly disclosed demands do not necessarily reflect what the workers actually want. They may even be viewed as a tactical manoeuvre to drum up more support. Although the demands of this grassroots struggle may well be limiting, the actions taken as part of the struggle are in themselves radical, and indeed seem to contradict some of the stated demands. It is these actions and where they may lead that count.

According to their 'Dockers' Charter', the dockers are demanding:

1) *Reinstatement of their jobs and a rejection of the casualisation of labour*

This would prevent further encroachment of capital by at best protecting jobs for a new generation, even if their struggle loses on every other count. However, the MDHC will only offer jobs back on the condition that casualisation is implemented. Even if jobs were reinstated many would not work under the same bosses because of personal antagonism that has arisen from the last years events.

2) *A profitable and expanding port*

The dockers believe that they can run the port along these lines. However, in the recent past dockers have refused to handle toxic waste and products involving gross exploitation. It seems that the future of the docks lies in it becoming a thoroughfare for toxic waste. (A senior official in the MDHC coincidentally happens to be the chairman of toxic processing firm Rechem). The dockers have expressed their objections to turning Liverpool into a toxic dump area. As they become increasingly politicised on ecological concerns and human rights they will become an obstacle to the docks economic prosperity.

3) *Trade union recognition*

The dockers want trade union recognition, but only as long as their shop stewards are recognised by the union. From what we have seen of the struggle, the most effective ideas have come from the workers themselves rather than the union. The workers radical actions have done more for their cause in the last twelve months than any 'round the table' union talks. So why detract energy into bureaucratic manoeuvring?

Tactics

The main tactic of the dockers in this 'extra-union struggle' has so far been to cause economic damage to the MDHC. They are succeeding in this and helping to bring the companies share price to an all-time low.

What gives the workers strength is not the union but the strong community ties in Liverpool and international support.

Their methods have included preventing scabs from working; both through daily pickets at the gates, and also by the creation of an uncomfortable climate for the scabs due to community and local press support. This has resulted in only half the workforce so far being replaced by scab labour.

The dockers have inflicted economic damage by occupying docks elsewhere, for example in Greenock, Scotland and Montreal in Canada, and in addition they have personalised their struggle by targeting prominent MDHC officials.

Their most effective tactic, though, has been internationalism, learning from the miners' strike and ditching ineffective suggestions from the left, such as the SWP's advocacy of mass pickets and making the dispute official, in favour of the dockers' idea of an international boycott of ships bound for Merseyside.

Support

The problem that the dockers have got in making their struggle even more effective is in the area of national workplace support, which has so far been minimal. At present their support groups around the country raise funds, publicise the struggle and occupy the scab labour agency Drake International, but this only involves a handful of people.

The most obvious place to look for practical support would be from other dockers, and then from workers in different trades. At present other workers have not been willing to put their jobs on the line, and secondary picketing is now legally very difficult.

Lacking workplace support and bypassing the union has meant that they have looked for support elsewhere, in this case with other grassroots struggles. In the process they have become increasingly politicised through an awareness of other issues.

Common ground

At this moment the signs are there which indicate a restructuring of capital. A major way in which this happens is by removing working class power. The forcing of a low wage economy, via casualisation and the Job Seekers Allowance, has meant the further oppression of those who work and of those who don't, ensuring capitalist reconstruction, rationalisation and increased productivity.

We have seen a reduction in labour intensive jobs, such as dockers and miners, which also happens to be where working class power has historically been the strongest. Parallel with this has been an increase in jobs in the service sector, which has been characteristically lacking in union and class power. An increasing erosion of workers' power is threatened, most recently in the TUC conference, with the government wanting to erode the right to strike, so support must now be gained outside of the workplace.

In Liverpool unemployment has reached 40%, and is particularly severe among the younger generation. With new industries establishing themselves, many young people in Liverpool no longer see the docks as a focus for the community and are not interested in working there.

With jobs not being available, or not being chosen, and hence the numbers of unemployed increasing, an alliance is necessary if the unemployed are not to be ignored politically. As capital extends its nodes of power from the workplace to daily life it becomes necessary to fight it outside the workplace. The products produced in the workplaces affect the environment and society as a whole, so it is up to everyone to have their say in what and how much is

produced. This is where the role of the unemployed becomes crucial.

Since the introduction of the welfare state, providing money for food and housing, basic needs need no longer be met through wage labour. (This is not to deny however that poverty nevertheless still exists). Where basic needs are met, capital's future success now does not just depend on exploitation in production and distribution of goods but on the constant creation of pseudo-needs and goods and their production and distribution.

A large proportion of people in our movement survive on benefits. We can (with difficulty) avoid having to partake in wage labour, so we have more opportunity to act on issues such as the effects of the commodities that are produced, for example the ecological effects of consumer society.

In order to consider the totality of their effects, decisions made about the workplace should be made by the whole community, not just the workers. For example, although the dockers' struggle is supported by the community, it lacks community involvement in decision making, which has primarily been the territory of striking dockers.

What our involvement can offer

Recognising the need for everyone to have a say in how society is run we soon come up against those that want to keep decision making power in the hands of capitalism. To prevent us from critiquing the whole system in its entirety the state uses divide and rule tactics. This is why people coming together, unless closely managed by the state, is outlawed, whether it be workers on a picket line or free partygoers. As soon as people begin to see the effects of consumer society, whether it be animal, human or ecological exploitation and destruction, they start to fight against these individual manifestations. But everything is interrelated and a necessary part of the system we are challenging. When we act we must see our struggle in the context of fighting the system in its complete manifestation, not individual parts of it.

The primary reason why the dockers approached groups from our movement was to draw in support from different areas of society, particularly the young. We must realise the dangers of being used, but to some extend it is a risk we have to face as the necessity of building a mass movement becomes imperative in the face of the threat of irreversible ecological disaster.

Uniting with other groups attacking capital is what will give us a voice and make us realise our own strength, avoiding any interference from unions, parliamentarianism and other reformist measures which ride on the back of our discontent.

Our movement should not be seeking to impose an ideology but rather to spread our ideas. We can most effectively argue along practical lines such as strategy, methods and organisation, for example the advantage of non-hierarchical structures and the use of direct action to block roads to inflict economic damage on MDHC. In conclusion, we should always be willing to support struggles that only have limited demands, such as for higher wages or job protection, as they are not only resisting further encroachment of capital, but also have the potential to transcend their limits and join in the wider struggle to weaken and destroy power.